

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Gell et al.)
Serial No.: 10/755,856) Group Art Unit: 1775
Filed: January 12, 2004)
For: COATINGS, MATERIALS,)
ARTICLES, AND METHODS OF)
MAKING THEREOF)

VIA FACSIMILE: 571-273-8300

Commissioner for Patents

P.O. Box 1450

Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

DO NOT ENTER: /JS/

04/09/2008

AMENDMENT

Sir:

This amendment is submitted in response to the Final Office Action dated February 5, 2008. Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for participating in an interview on March 6, 2008. Please amend the Application as follows.

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Withdrawn) A method of producing a material comprising:

injecting precursor solution droplets into a thermal spray flame wherein a first portion of the precursor solution droplets are injected into a hot zone of the flame and a second portion of the precursor solution droplets are injected into a cool zone of the flame;

fragmenting the droplets of the first portion to form reduced size droplets and pyrolyzing the reduced size droplets to form pyrolyzed particles in the hot zone;

at least partially melting the pyrolyzed particles in the hot zone;

depositing the at least partially melted pyrolyzed particles on a substrate;

fragmenting at least part of the second portion of precursor solution droplets to form smaller droplets and forming non-liquid material from the smaller droplets; and

depositing the non liquid material on the substrate.

2. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 1, wherein the substrate is preheated to a temperature of about 150°C to about 600°C.

3. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 1, wherein the substrate is maintained at a temperature of about 250° to about 700°C.

4. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 1, wherein the precursor solution droplets have sufficient mass and velocity to carry the precursor solution droplets into the hot zone.

5. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 1, wherein the substrate is selected from the group consisting of metals, coated metals, bond coated metals, ceramics, cermets, stainless steel, titanium, aluminum, nickel superalloys, ceramics, and plastics.

6. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 1, wherein the precursor solution droplets comprise a precursor solution comprising a precursor salt selected from the group consisting of carboxylate salts, acetate salts, nitrate salts, chloride salts, alkoxide salts, and butoxide salts of alkali metals, alkaline earth metals, transition metals, and rare earth metals, and combinations comprising one or more of the foregoing salts.

7. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 6, wherein the precursor salt is selected from the group consisting of zirconium nitrate, zirconium carbonate, zirconium acetate, yttrium nitrate, aluminum nitrate, gadolinium acetate, gadolinium nitrate, samarium acetate, samarium nitrate, ytterbium acetate, ytterbium nitrate, nickel nitrate, cerium acetate, lanthanum acetate, iron nitrate, zinc nitrate, and combinations comprising one or more of the foregoing salts.

8. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 1, wherein the precursor solution droplets are injected radially at about 90° relative to the flame axis.

9. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 1, wherein the precursor solution droplets are injected axially.

10. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 1, wherein the precursor solution droplets have a diameter of about 0.5 to about 50 micrometers.

11. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 1, wherein the thermal spray flame is a plasma spray flame.

12. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 1, wherein the precursor solution droplets comprise multiple precursor solutions.

13. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 12, wherein the multiple precursor solutions comprise different precursor salts.

14. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 1, wherein the precursor solution droplets are injected using an atomizing injector nozzle.

15. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 1, wherein the precursor solution droplets are injected using a piezo electric crystal induced liquid injector.

16. (Currently Amended) A material comprising:

splats having an average diameter of less than or equal to about 2 micrometers; and

at least one inter pass boundary having a porosity of about 20 to about 95 volume percent, based on a total volume of the inter pass boundary.

17. (Currently Amended) The material of Claim 16 wherein the material comprises ~~splats having an average diameter of less than or equal to about 2 micrometers and a~~ thickness less than or equal to about 800 nanometers.

18. (Currently Amended) The material of Claim ~~16~~⁷, wherein all splats are less than 5 micrometers in diameter.

19. (Original) The material of Claim 16, wherein the material has a porosity of about 1 to about 50 volume percent, based on the total volume of the material.

20. (Original) The material of Claim 19 wherein the porosity results from pores that are micrometer sized, submicron sized, nanometer sized or a combination of two or more of the foregoing.

21. (Original) The material of Claim 19 wherein the porosity is greater than or equal to about 8 volume percent and the porosity is three dimensional.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Previously Presented) The material of Claim 16 wherein the inter pass boundary has a thickness of about 0.1 to about 2 micrometers.

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Previously Presented) The material of Claim 16 wherein the material coats a substrate and there are no inter pass boundaries within about 50 micrometers of an interface between the substrate and the material.

26. (Original) The material of Claim 16 wherein the material comprises one or more vertical cracks.

27. (Original) The material of Claim 26 wherein the vertical cracks have lengths of about 0.5 to about 1.0 times the thickness of the material.

28. (Original) The material of Claim 26 wherein the vertical cracks are spaced at a distance up to two times the thickness of the material.

29. (Original) The material of Claim 26, wherein the material has a porosity of about 1 to about 50 volume percent, based on the total volume of the material.

30. (Original) The material of Claim 16, wherein the material has a thickness of about 1 micrometers to about 5 millimeters.

31. (Original) A wear resistant coating, corrosion resistance coating, thermal barrier coating, dielectric coating, catalytic film, electrolyte layer, electrode layer, thick metal oxide coating, solid conductive layer, soft magnetic film, semi-conductor film, sensor or activator comprising the material of Claim 16.

32. (Withdrawn) A structural preform, layered material, graded material or composite material comprising the material of Claim 16.

33. (Original) The material of Claim 16, wherein the material comprises a metal oxide, metal carbide, metal nitride, metal silicide or a combination of one or more of the foregoing.

34. (Original) The material of Claim 33, wherein the metal comprises aluminum, boron, sodium, potassium, lithium, calcium, barium, and magnesium chromium, iron, nickel,

zinc, niobium, titanium, zirconium, scandium, yttrium, lanthanum, cerium, gadolinium, praseodymium, neodymium, samarium, terbium, ytterbium or a combinations comprising one or more of the foregoing metals.

35. (Original) The material of Claim 16, wherein the material comprises a stabilized or partially stabilized ceramic.

36. (Original) The material of Claim 35, wherein the stabilized ceramic comprises zirconia stabilized with yttria, zirconia stabilized with ceria, zirconia stabilized with scandia, zirconia stabilized with calcia, zirconia stabilized with magnesia, zirconia stabilized with gadolinia, zirconia stabilized with lanthia, zirconia stabilized with samaria, zirconia stabilized with neodymium or zirconia stabilized with ytterbia.

37. (Currently Amended) A thermal barrier coating comprising:

splats having an average diameter of less than or equal to about 2 micrometers;

at least one inter pass boundary having a porosity of about 20 to about 95 volume percent, based on a total volume of the inter pass boundary;

a thickness of greater than about 125 micrometers;

vertical cracks; and

a coating porosity of about 15 to about 40 volume%, based on the total volume of the coating.

38. (Previously Presented) The thermal barrier coating of Claim 37 comprising ZrO_2 and 7 percent by weight Y_2O_3 based on the total weight of the coating.

39. (Cancelled)

40. (Previously Presented) The thermal barrier coating of Claim 37 wherein the inter pass boundary has a thickness of about 0.1 to about 2 micrometers.

41. (Cancelled)

42. (Cancelled)

43. (Currently Amended) The thermal barrier coating of Claim 37, ~~further comprising wherein the splats having an average diameter of less than or equal to about 2 micrometers and a thickness less than or equal to about 800 nanometers.~~

44. (Currently Amended) The thermal barrier coating of Claim ~~37~~⁴³, wherein all splats are less than 5 micrometers in diameter.

45. (Previously Presented) The thermal barrier coating of Claim 37 wherein the coating porosity results from pores that are micrometer sized, submicron sized, nanometer sized or a combination of two or more of the foregoing.

46. (Previously Presented) The thermal barrier coating of Claim 37 wherein the coating porosity is three dimensional.

47. (Previously Presented) The thermal barrier coating of Claim 37 wherein the vertical cracks have lengths of about 0.5 to about 1.0 times the thickness of the material.

48. (Previously Presented) The thermal barrier coating of Claim 37 wherein the vertical cracks are spaced at a distance up to two times the thickness of the material.

49. (Previously Presented) The thermal barrier coating of Claim 37, wherein the coating comprises a metal oxide, metal carbide, metal nitride, metal silicide or a combination of one or more of the foregoing.

50. (Previously Presented) The thermal barrier coating of Claim 49, wherein the metal comprises aluminum, boron, sodium, potassium, lithium, calcium, barium, and magnesium chromium, iron, nickel, zinc, niobium, titanium, zirconium, scandium, yttrium, lanthanum, cerium, gadolinium, praseodymium, neodymium, samarium, terbium, ytterbium or a combinations comprising one or more of the foregoing metals.

51. (Previously Presented) The thermal barrier coating of Claim 49, wherein the metal oxide comprises a stabilized or partially stabilized ceramic.

52. (Previously Presented) The thermal barrier coating of Claim 51, wherein the stabilized ceramic comprises zirconia stabilized with yttria, zirconia stabilized with ceria, zirconia stabilized with scandia, zirconia stabilized with calcia, zirconia stabilized with magnesia, zirconia stabilized with gadolinia, zirconia stabilized with lanthia, zirconia stabilized with samaria, zirconia stabilized with neodymium or zirconia stabilized with ytterbia.

53. (Withdrawn) An electrolyte layer comprising
splats having an average diameter of less than or equal to about 2 micrometers;
a thickness less than about 200 micrometers; and
porosity less than about 5 volume% based on the total volume of the material.

54. (Withdrawn) The electrolyte layer of Claim 53 comprising ZrO_2 and 20 percent by weight Y_2O_3 based on the total weight of the material.

55. (Withdrawn) A thick metal oxide coating comprising
splats having an average diameter of less than or equal to about 2 micrometers;
a thickness of about 500 to about 5000 micrometers; and
a porosity of about 15 to about 40 volume% based on the total volume of the material.

56. (Withdrawn) The thick metal oxide layer of Claim 55 comprising Al_2O_3 .

57. (Withdrawn) An anode layer comprising
splats having an average diameter of less than or equal to about 2 micrometers;
a thickness of about 20 to about 200 micrometers; and

a porosity of about 15 to about 50 volume% based on the total volume of the material.

58. (Withdrawn) The anode layer of Claim 57 comprising NiO or La₂O₃-doped CeO₂.

59. (Withdrawn) A coating disposed upon a substrate and comprising at least one interpass boundary, wherein no inter pass boundaries are present within about 50 micrometers of an interface between the substrate and the coating.

60. (Withdrawn) The coating of Claim 59 wherein the coating has a thickness of about 1 micrometer to about 5 millimeters and there are no vertical cracks.

61. (Withdrawn) A bulk structural material comprising splats having an average diameter of less than or equal to about 2 micrometers wherein about 80 to about 95% of the splats are splats having an average diameter of less than or equal to about 2 micrometers.

62. (Withdrawn) The bulk structural material of Claim 61 wherein the material has a thickness of about 5 millimeters to about 10 centimeters and no vertical cracks or inter pass boundaries.

63. (Previously Presented) A coating or bulk structural material comprising at least two alternating layers wherein one layer is a material comprising splats having an average diameter of less than or equal to about 2 micrometers and no vertical cracks or inter pass boundaries wherein about 80 to about 95% of the splats are splats having an average diameter of less than or equal to about 2 micrometers and another layer is a material having inter pass boundaries and optionally vertical cracks.

64. (Cancelled)

65. (Withdrawn) The coating of Claim 59, comprising a metal oxide, metal carbide, metal nitride, metal silicide, or a combination comprising one or more of the foregoing.

66. (Withdrawn) The coating of Claim 65, wherein the metal comprises aluminum, boron, sodium, potassium, lithium, calcium, barium, and magnesium chromium, iron, nickel, zinc, niobium, titanium, zirconium, scandium, yttrium, lanthanum, cerium, gadolinium, praseodymium, neodymium, samarium, terbium, ytterbium or a combination comprising one or more of the foregoing metals.

67. (Withdrawn) The coating of Claim 65, wherein the metal oxide comprises a stabilized or partially stabilized ceramic.

68. (Withdrawn) The coating of Claim 67, wherein the stabilized ceramic comprises zirconia stabilized with yttria, zirconia stabilized with ceria, zirconia stabilized with scandia, zirconia stabilized with calcia, zirconia stabilized with magnesia, zirconia stabilized with gadolinia, zirconia stabilized with lanthia, zirconia stabilized with samaria, zirconia stabilized with neodymium or zirconia stabilized with ytterbia.

REMARKS

Claims 1-21, 23, 25-38, 40, and 43-68 are pending in the present Application. Claims 1-15, 32, 53-62, and 65-68 have been withdrawn from consideration. Claim 63 has been allowed, claim 64 has been cancelled, and no claims have been added, leaving claims 16-21, 23, 25-31, 33-38, 40, 43-52, and 65-68 for consideration upon entry of the present Amendment.

Claims 16 and 17 have been amended to move a limitation from claim 17 to claim 16; and claims 37 and 43 have been amended to move a limitation from claim 43 to claim 37. Additionally, claims 18 and 44 have been amended for clarification purposes. Accordingly, no new matter has been introduced by these amendments.

Reconsideration and allowance of the claims are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Objections and Election/Restriction Requirement

The Examiner has objected to claims 17-18 and 43-44 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Further, the Examiner has withdrawn claims 16, 19-21, 23, 25-31, 33-38, 40, 45-52, 59-60, and 65-68 as being drawn to an invention that is materially distinct from the originally elected invention.

Based on the suggestions made by the Examiner in a telephone interview, independent claims 16 and 37 have been amended to include limitations in dependent claims 17 and 43, respectively, such that those claims now cover the originally elected invention. Accordingly, the withdrawal of claims 16 and 37 and the claims depending therefrom, i.e., claims 19-21, 23, 25-31, 33-36, 39, 40, and 45-52, has been removed since those claims are now directed to the originally elected invention. As a result of the foregoing amendments, the objections to claims 17-18 and 43-44 also have been rendered moot.

35 U.S.C. § 112 Rejection

Claim 64 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Claim 64 has been cancelled, rendering the rejection of this claim moot.

It is believed that the foregoing amendments and remarks fully comply with the Office Action and that the claims herein should now be allowable to Applicants. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance are requested.

If there are any additional charges with respect to this Amendment or otherwise, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 06-1130.

Respectfully submitted,

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